

Spearheading Female Empowerment on the World Stage

As a former leader in the World Bank Group and active role model for female leaders, HONDA Keiko has extensive experience in private sector investment in developing countries. Honda advises younger women to determine the definition of their own success and challenge themselves positively.



HONDA Keiko

After working for consulting firms such as Bain & Company and McKinsey & Company, Honda acted as chief executive officer of the World Bank Group's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), from 2013 to 2019. Upon retiring from MIGA, Honda was invited to be adjunct professor at the School of International Public Affairs at Columbia University (<https://sipa.columbia.edu/>). She currently lives in New York.

breach of contract. Flying around the world inspecting local sites, receiving the board's understanding, and proposing projects to investors, the job demands a wide range of essential skills, from diplomacy and political negotiation to risk assessment and management.

During Honda's time at MIGA, the agency more than doubled its guarantees of private investment. Honda's proudest achievement was being able to help supply power to approximately 50 million people worldwide. One of her most impressive projects has been a power plant in the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire. The power station actively supports women in the country who have begun to produce a cassava-based product using electricity. The women now earn enough money to

For six and a half years until the end of October 2019, Honda had been promoting investment in developing countries as executive vice president and CEO of the World Bank Group's Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). MIGA is an organization that promotes investment in developing countries by providing private companies with political risk insurance to protect against political instability and

In January of this year, HONDA Keiko was appointed adjunct professor at the School of International Public Affairs at Columbia University, the world's leading school in global policy. From March, Honda has been teaching a course on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) investing. With capacity for this course having been quickly reached, it just goes to show how highly regarded she is.



Top: Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos (2019). Bottom left: Taking part in the India Economic Summit organized by the World Economic Forum (2017). Bottom right: Visiting Pakistan. MIGA is supporting the country's development through actions such as investing in hydropower in an effort to resolve power shortages.



would then get direct feedback from the team and the client. We would adopt any good ideas and make sure everyone could share information." This way of working would become useful at MIGA, too.

When Honda's daughter was a high school student, she said, "Mom, you should do something for society," which got Honda thinking about giving it a try. This is one of the reasons behind Honda's transition to MIGA. Honda advised younger women, "It's important to determine the definition of your own success, and then to challenge yourself positively. Your own common sense is often not that of the world's. Listen a lot and broaden your horizons."

Young women these days have more opportunities than Honda ever did. Honda believes that young, positive women should take advantage of these opportunities and contribute towards solving global issues. ✿

send their children to school. "If you invest in women, they invest in the education of their children. It's an investment for the next generation," Honda says.

One of the things Honda has been working on is empowering women. She has worked hard to promote equal work opportunities for female employees, and in the process launched the MIGA Gender CEO Award. This award recognizes outstanding female senior managers (CEOs or equivalent) who have contributed to the World Bank Group's goals of poverty reduction and shared prosperity.

When Honda graduated from university, it was not as easy for women to find work as it is now. However, she was able to secure a job with a non-Japanese consulting company. After gaining an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, she got a job at

McKinsey & Company, where she hit a wall in terms of career progression. Although she found herself in a managerial position when still only in her twenties, Honda felt that things were going nowhere, no matter how hard she tried. But it was not long before she found her own way of working. "First, we would scrutinize the facts and then make a plan. We



Honda helped to successfully finance a power plant in the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire. Pictured here with local women who produce a cassava-based product.